

NMRC Researcher Ties for First at the Armed Forces Open Chess Championship

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SILVER SPRING (NNS) -- A Naval Medical Research Center (NMRC) scientist tied for first at the Armed Forces Open (AFO) chess championship held at West Point Military Academy, New York, October 7-9 with a score of 4.5/5. Lt. Chaselynn Watters, Microbiologist, Wound Infections Department (WID), was one of 44 active duty, reservists, and retired military representatives from across the Navy, Marines, Army, and Air Force.

After five rounds and three days of play, Watters tied with a retired Air Force Master Sergeant before coming up one tie-break point short of winning. No rookie to chess, Watters is a United States Chess Federation rated National chess master, and has competed in military chess championships around the world, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Chess Championship in Hungary earlier this year.

"The AFO is a delightful experience," said Watters. "You get to meet wizened veterans from all services, including those who served in Vietnam and the Korean War, to active duty line and staff corps officers, and enlisted personnel traveling as far as Qatar and Germany to participate."

While he spends his off time figuring out how to win a complicated chess game against a seasoned opponent, Watters primary focus is developing biomedical research solutions for the warfighter.

Watters began conducting military research in 2013 as an Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education postdoctoral research fellow at the Naval Medical Research Unit - San Antonio. He later joined the Navy in 2015, and now continues to bring his insight, experience and research skills to NMRC.

"My primary research projects focus on trying to harness the therapeutic potential of commensal bacteria and viruses to eradicate antibiotic resistant bacteria that are problematic for wound infections," explained Watters.

The primary mission of WID is to develop and evaluate novel and alternative treatment and prevention strategies for multidrug-resistant wound infections, which have increasingly afflicted U.S. military members injured in combat.

"From the bright-eyed midshipman to the cadets from the U.S. Naval Academy and West Point respectively, it was really great meeting old and new faces alike, and I played some decent chess, which is always a plus," said Watters.

From the research bench to the chess board, Watters executes discipline and attention to detail in every move he makes.

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Lt. Chaselynn Watters, Microbiologist, Wound Infections Department, Naval Medical Research Center (left, front, seated) plays his final round of chess against Larry Larkins of Virginia, U.S Navy Veteran (right, front, seated) at the Armed Forces Open at West Point, New York, October 9 as spectators watch their moves. (photo courtesy Al Lawrence)

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